

### Amendments to the Claims

1-35. (Cancelled)

36. (Previously presented) A method for precluding elution of lead and nickel from a plumbing device made of a copper alloy that includes a valve and a tube coupling, comprising washing at least a liquid-contacting part of the plumbing device of a copper alloy containing both lead and nickel, or nickel alone, with a cleaning fluid incorporating therein nitric acid and hydrochloric acid as an inhibitor under conditions of a temperature and a duration permitting effective removal of both lead and nickel, or nickel alone, thereby effectively depriving a surface of the liquid-contacting part of both lead and nickel, or nickel alone, and causing the hydrochloric acid to form a coating film on the surface of the liquid-contacting part and preclude elution of both lead and nickel, or nickel alone, from the surface of the liquid-contacting part in the presence of the coating film.

37. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 36, wherein the hydrochloric acid as an inhibitor in the cleaning fluid is caused to form a film of  $\text{Cl}^-$  ions on the surface of the liquid-contacting part.

38. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 36, wherein the nitric acid has a concentration  $c$  in a range of  $0.5 \text{ wt\%} < c < 7 \text{ wt\%}$  and the hydrochloric acid has a concentration  $d$  in a range of  $0.05 \text{ wt\%} < d < 0.7 \text{ wt\%}$  in the cleaning fluid.

39. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 36, wherein the temperature is set to  $10^\circ\text{C} \leq x \leq 50^\circ\text{C}$  and the duration is set to  $5 \text{ minutes} \leq y \leq 30 \text{ minutes}$ , wherein  $y = 250/x$  is satisfied, to attain removal of both lead and nickel effectively from the surface of the liquid-contacting part.

40. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 36, wherein the duration is set to 20 seconds  $\leq y \leq$  30 minutes and the temperature is set to 10°C  $\leq x \leq$  50°C to attain removal of nickel effectively from the surface of the liquid-contacting part.

41. (Currently amended) A method for precluding elution of lead from a plumbing device made of a copper alloy that includes a valve and a tube coupling, comprising at least a degreasing step, a cold water-washing step subsequent to the degreasing step, a plating step, an acid-pickling step and a cold water-washing step subsequent to the acid-pickling step, thus precluding elution of lead from the plumbing device.

42. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 41, which further comprises a deleading step prior to the plating step.

43. (Currently amended) A method according to claim ~~41~~ 42, wherein the deleading step uses a cleaning fluid identical in composition and concentration ~~with a~~ to the cleaning fluid for the acid-pickling step.

44. (Currently amended) A method according to claim ~~42~~ 43, wherein the cleaning fluid used in the deleading step is reused as the cleaning fluid in the acid-pickling step.

45. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 41, wherein at least alkaline waste liquid discharged from the degreasing step and acidic waste liquid discharged from the acid-pickling step are mixed and neutralized, and dilute alkaline waste liquid discharged from the cold water-washing step subsequent to the degreasing step and dilute acidic waste liquid discharged from the cold water-washing step subsequent to the acid picking step are mixed and neutralized.

46. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 41, further comprising a hot water-washing step performed prior to the degreasing step to effect removal of a deposited substance.

47. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 41, further comprising a neutralizing step performed subsequent to the cold water-washing step after the degreasing step to effect perfect neutralization and removal of an alkali component.

48. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 41, further comprising a rust-preventing step subsequent to the cold water-washing step after the acid-pickling step.

49. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 36, wherein component parts resulting from forging or from forging and subsequent machining are individually subjected to both of a deleading treatment and a nickel-removing treatment or to a nickel-removing treatment alone and the treated component parts are assembled into a finished product.

50. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 36, wherein a finished product formed of a plurality of parts resulting from forging or from forging and subsequent machining is subjected to both of a deleading treatment and a nickel-removing treatment or a nickel-removing treatment alone.

51. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 36, wherein the copper alloy that is subjected to both of a deleading treatment and a nickel-removing treatment or a nickel-removing treatment alone is brass or bronze.

52. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 36, wherein the plumbing device is a device that has a surface thereof subjected to a plating treatment using a nickel-containing metal.

53. (Currently amended) A plumbing device made of a copper alloy containing both lead and nickel, or nickel alone, that includes a valve and a tube coupling, having at least a liquid-contacting part washed with a cleaning fluid incorporating therein nitric acid and hydrochloric acid as an inhibitor under conditions of a temperature and a duration permitting effective removal of both lead and nickel, or nickel alone, thereby performing deleading treatment and nickel-removing treatment or nickel-removing treatment alone and causing the hydrochloric acid to form a coating film on a surface of the liquid-contacting part to thereby effectively precluding elution of both lead and nickel or elution of nickel alone from the surface of the liquid-contacting part in the presence of the coating-layer film.

54. (Previously presented) A plumbing device made of a copper alloy that includes a valve and a tube coupling, successively treated in at least a degreasing step, a cold water-washing step subsequent to the degreasing step, a plating step, an acid-pickling step and a cold water-washing step subsequent to the acid-pickling step.

55. (Previously presented) A plumbing device according to claim 54, further treated in a deleading step prior to the plating step.

56. (Previously presented) A plumbing device according to claim 54, further treated in a hot water-washing step prior to the degreasing step to effect removal of a deposited substance.

57. (Previously presented) A plumbing device according to claim 54, further treated in a neutralizing step subsequent to said cold water-washing step following said degreasing step to perfectly neutralize and remove an alkali component.

58. (Previously presented) A plumbing device according to claim 54, further treated in a rust-preventing step subsequent to the cold water-washing step after the acid-pickling step.

59. (Previously presented) A plumbing device according to claim 53, comprising component parts forged, or forged and subsequently machined, individually subjected to both a deleading treatment and a nickel-removing treatment or a nickel-removing treatment, wherein the treated component parts are assembled into a finished product.

60. (Currently amended) A plumbing device according to claim 53, further comprising a plurality of parts cast, or cast and subsequently machined, and subjected to both of a deleading treatment and a nickel-removing treatment or a nickel-removing treatment.

61. (Previously presented) A plumbing device according to claim 53, wherein the copper alloy treated by both of a deleading treatment and a nickel-removing treatment or a nickel-removing treatment is brass or bronze.

62. (Previously presented) A plumbing device according to claim 61, wherein the brass is a material proofed against elution of zinc.

63. (Previously presented) A plumbing device according to claim 53, wherein the plumbing device has a surface thereof plated with a nickel-containing alloy.

64. (Currently amended) ~~In a~~ A method for precluding elution of lead and nickel from a plumbing device made of a copper alloy that includes a valve and a tube coupling set forth in according to claim 36, the wherein a cleaning fluid for removing both lead and nickel or nickel alone comprising a mixed acid incorporating therein the nitric acid as a cleaning fluid and the hydrochloric acid as the inhibitor is used, thus precluding elution of both lead and nickel from the plumbing device.

65. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 41, wherein component parts resulting from forging or from forging and subsequent machining are individually subjected to both of a deleading treatment and a nickel-removing treatment or to a nickel-removing treatment alone and the treated component parts are assembled into a finished product.

66. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 41, wherein a finished product formed of a plurality of parts resulting from forging or from forging and subsequent machining is subjected to both of a deleading treatment and a nickel-removing treatment or a nickel-removing treatment alone.

67. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 41, wherein the copper alloy that is subjected to both of a deleading treatment and a nickel-removing treatment or a nickel-removing treatment alone is brass or bronze.

68. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 41, wherein the plumbing device is a device that has a surface thereof subjected to a plating treatment using a nickel-containing metal.

69. (Previously presented) A plumbing device according to claim 54, comprising component parts forged, or forged and subsequently machined, individually subjected to both a deleading treatment and a nickel-removing treatment or a nickel-removing treatment, wherein the treated component parts are assembled into a finished product.

70. (Previously presented) A plumbing device according to claim 54, comprising a plurality of parts cast, or cast and subsequently machined, and subjected to both of a deleading treatment and a nickel-removing treatment or a nickel-removing treatment.

71. (Previously presented) A plumbing device according to claim 54, wherein the copper alloy treated by both of a deleading treatment and a nickel-removing treatment or a nickel-removing treatment is brass or bronze.

72. (Previously presented) A plumbing device according to claim 54, wherein the plumbing device has a surface thereof plated with a nickel-containing alloy.

73. (Currently amended) ~~In a~~ A ~~method for precluding elution of lead and nickel from a plumbing device made of a copper alloy that includes a valve and a tube coupling set forth in~~ according to claim 41, the ~~wherein a cleaning fluid for removing both lead and nickel or nickel alone comprising a mixed acid incorporating therein the nitric acid as a cleaning fluid and the hydrochloric acid as the inhibitor is used, thus precluding elution of both lead and nickel from the plumbing device.~~